

Seven-story building planned in south Bethlehem

Developer hopes \$4 million project will be completed this year

Author: 69 News , follow: @69news, news@wfmz.com

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BETHLEHEM, Pa. - With no discussion Tuesday night, Bethlehem City Council quickly and unanimously approved a "certificate of appropriateness" for construction of a seven-story building at 30 W. 4th St. on the city's south side.

An existing building at that address will be demolished.

City Council's action was only step one in a multiple-step process,

explained a spokeswoman in the city's community development office, who added the design can still change. Quick Clicks Restaurant, bar planned for south Bethlehem Bethlehem Community Garden may be victim of progress Nittany Lion bench installed in Bethlehem

Last month, the city's Historic Conservation Commission approved the proposed building "in concept only."

The next step will be to get the project's land development plans approved by the city's planning commission, explained developer Dennis Benner.

He intends to go before the planning commission within 60 days.

Assuming prompt final approval from the planning commission, he hopes construction of the new building will be completed by the end of this year.

Benner has said it will take seven or eight months to complete the building.

The developer said the house that now stands at W. Fourth and Vine streets has been condemned by the city because of mold and water damaged.

Benner estimated the project cost at \$4 million to \$5 million.

He explained the new building will have a bar/restaurant on the first floor and six floors of "upper scale" apartments above it.

Benner described it as a "Manhattan-style" eatery, with doors that swing wide open in nice weather so people in the restaurant will feel like they are eating outside. He said it's too soon to say what kind of food the restaurant will serve.

The developer said the apartments will be designed for Lehigh University students. He said two of the two-bedroom apartments will be on each floor, along with one one-bedroom apartment. He said each bedroom will have its own bathroom.

The proposed building is in Bethlehem's City Revitalization and Improvement Zone -- CRIZ -- which gives developers financial support developers from tax dollars.

Benner and architect Howard Kulp presented their plans to the Historic Conservation Commission on March 17.

The commission's recommendation for conceptual approval of the project, which was acted on by City Council, notes that it still must review final design, materials and details.

It states final approval won't come until "full working drawings, including mechanical, electrical and plumbing drawings, are completed and a building permit is issued."

Its recommendation to council simply states the first floor of the proposed building will have a commercial use, with large storefront windows and a corner entrance.

A separate side entrance will lead to apartments on the upper floors.

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